

DECLASSIFIED AND RELEASED BY
CENTRAL INTELLIGENCE AGENCY
SOURCE METHOD EXEMPTION 25X2B
NAZI WAR CRIMES DISCLOSURE ACT
DATE 2006

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

SECRET

6 February 1964

MEMORANDUM FOR: EE/G/CE
ATTN: []

SUBJECT: Debriefing of Peter DERYABIN Concerning Operation ZEPPELIN

1. Peter DERYABIN was aware of Operation ZEPPELIN from May 1952 through September 1953 while he was in the Austro-German Branch of the MGB. DERYABIN recalls that ZEPPELIN was a German intelligence operation against the USSR, which was divided into various numbered groups. He said that in 1947 to 1948 ABAKUMOV, Chief, MGB, started an operation to recruit ex-Nazis. He said that all the prominent ex-Nazis in jail in the Soviet Union were kept in the Vladimir jail in the city of Vladimir. This included Admiral CANARIS' deputy and several other high level Abwehr generals. DERYABIN said that at least once a week a case officer from the Austro-German Branch would go down and talk to these prominent Nazis for the purpose of interrogating them on ZEPPELIN agents and the location of prominent Nazis. DERYABIN contends that most of the prominent Nazis wound up in Spain, Switzerland, Argentina and Sweden after World War II. If one was found in Germany, the MGB Station in Karlshorst was alerted.

2. DERYABIN recalls that ABAKUMOV (ABAKUMOV commanded SMERSH until it was attached to the MGB in 1947) had Soviet agents in ZEPPELIN. He said that the manner of operation was that ABAKUMOV used to send many agents to work against ZEPPELIN with the hope that one out of a hundred would penetrate ZEPPELIN.

3. DERYABIN recalls from his time in the Austro-German Branch in 1952 and 1953 that when ABAKUMOV came over to the MGB, he brought with him eight volumes of agents being sought by SMERSH between 1942 and 1947. Each of these volumes had 300-400 names. DERYABIN claims that we in American intelligence can not really appreciate the diligence with which the Soviets pursued tiny tidbits of information against German ZEPPELIN agents.

4. DERYABIN claims that literally hundreds of thousands of Germans were interviewed for information on former ZEPPELIN agents. He said that in the 1940s the objective of the MGB was to recruit these ex-Nazis before the Americans got to them.

5. DERYABIN recalls that of the some twenty-one agents the MGB had in Germany in 1952-1953, at least seven or eight were former Nazis. He said in fact their PRQ I included their Nazi origin in the first four lines. He recalls that several were news correspondents under Hitler and later stayed

BEST AVAILABLE COPY

SECRET

correspondents after World War II. Some worked in the police, although he claims not in the secret police. Several were low-level Sturmgruppenfuhrers in the Nazi Party. In passing DERYABIN noted that the MGB interviewed thousands of Germans regarding GEHLEN and they were rather chagrined that GEHLEN was not a Nazi Party member.

6. DERYABIN knew of two ZEPPELIN agents personally. The first was a woman named AVDEY (see appropriate traces). Prior to DERYABIN's arrival in Vienna in September 1953, the Fourth Department (CI) had sent a letter to the Austro-German Branch saying that Miss AVDEY lived in the English Sector in Vienna. This information was picked up from a letter that Miss AVDEY sent to her sister in the USSR. Miss AVDEY moved to Vienna in 1948/49 and there was some information that she was in contact with the British Intelligence Service. AVDEY was tubercular and was otherwise in bad health according to DERYABIN. Nevertheless DERYABIN was ordered to have one of the agents, KHADZHIVERONIUS, a Greek living in Vienna, look up Miss AVDEY and bring her to the Soviet Sector of Vienna where she could be arrested. He even bought a new automobile for the Greek to do this. He had not accomplished this abduction of AVDEY by October 1953 when he was obliged to turn the AVDEY case over to GOLITSYN and KRIVOSHEIN, two of his colleagues newly arrived in Vienna. DERYABIN stated that after he turned the case over, G and K got orders from Moscow to snatch Miss AVDEY as soon as possible. He says that when he defected on 13 February 1954, Miss AVDEY still had not been snatched but the operation was supposed to go off in several days.

7. The other ZEPPELIN operation that DERYABIN knew about concerned a Lt. HORN. HORN was the Adjutant of General TSELARIUS (phonetic) who was the German Abwehr Chief in Finland during World War II. After World War II, TSELARIUS fled to Switzerland and then to Spain. HORN on the other hand, went under cover in Sweden where he lived under another name until as late as 1952. In 1952 the MGB found HORN's mother in Germany. DERYABIN doesn't recall where in Germany although he says it must have been West Germany as the MGB was required to use German agents to contact her. The MGB had a big file on HORN--some 150 pages. HORN's mother was persuaded to write a letter to her son inviting him to Germany. DERYABIN recalls that as of January 1953, HORN still had not come to Germany. The Soviets got on to Lt. HORN due to the fact that TSELARIUS's Finnish Abwehr files were captured by the Soviets after World War II. Supposedly they were in the hold of a ship which was sent to Leningrad after World War II.

8. We hope the above can be of some use to you. We regret that after ten years DERYABIN cannot remember more details.

[]
CSR/CI/S